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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/645,065	08/24/2000	Wendy Hufford	GES-0005	2863

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EXAMINER
PASS, NATALIE

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
3626	

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Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No. 09/645,065	Applicant(s) HUFFORD, WENDY	
	Examiner Natalie A. Pass	Art Unit 3626	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

1)☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on *24 August 2000* .

2a)☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b)☒ This action is non-final.

3)☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disp sition of Claims

4)☒ Claim(s) *1-18* is/are pending in the application.

4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.

5)☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.

6)☒ Claim(s) *1-18* is/are rejected.

7)☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.

8)☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

9)☒ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.

10)☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a)☐ accepted or b)☐ objected to by the Examiner.

Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).

11)☐ The proposed drawing correction filed on _____ is: a)☐ approved b)☐ disapproved by the Examiner.

If approved, corrected drawings are required in reply to this Office action.

12)☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

13)☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).

a)☐ All b)☐ Some * c)☐ None of:

1.☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.

2.☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____ .

3.☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

14)☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application).

a) ☐ The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.

15)☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121.

Attachment(s)

1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) *2* .
4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). _____ .
5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
6) ☐ Other: .

DETAILED ACTION

Notice to Applicant

1. This communication is in response to the application filed 24 August 2000. Claims 1-18 are pending.

Specification

2. The abstract of the disclosure is objected to because it exceeds 150 words in length. Correction is required. See MPEP § 608.01(b).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

3. The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

> The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

4. Claims 14-16 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

(A) As per claims 14-16, Applicant recites in independent claim 13 on lines 1-5 "In a computer network that includes [...], a method of early warning of potential litigation, comprising [...] " which implies a method claim, however dependent claims 14-16 recite "the network of claim 13 wherein" on line 1 of each claim. The language of claims 14-16 makes it unclear into which statutory category these claims fit – a computer network or a method.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC §101

5. 35 U.S.C. 101 reads as follows:

> Whoever invents or discovers any new and useful process, machine, manufacture, or composition of matter, or any new and useful improvement thereof, may obtain a patent therefor, subject to the conditions and requires of this title.

6. Claims 1-4, 6, 13 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 101 because the claimed invention is directed to non-statutory subject matter.

The basis of this rejection is set forth in a two-prong test of:

(1) whether the invention is within the technological arts; and

(2) whether the invention produces a useful, concrete, and tangible result.

For a claimed invention to be statutory, the claimed invention must be within the technological arts. Mere ideas in the abstract (i.e., abstract idea, law of nature, natural phenomena) that do not apply, involve, use, or advance the technological arts fail to promote the "progress of science and the useful arts" (i.e., the physical sciences as opposed to social sciences, for example) and therefore are found to be non-statutory subject matter. For a process claim to pass muster, the recited process must somehow apply, involve, use, or advance the technological arts.

In the present case, claims 1-4, 6, 13 only recite abstract ideas. The recited claims detailing the steps of gathering data, reviewing issues, prioritizing issues, consulting counsel, determining, and issuing an alert or a report and proceeding to litigate do not apply, involve, use,

or advance the technological arts since all of the recited steps can be performed in the mind of the user or by use of a pencil and paper. These steps only constitute different parts of a method for early warning of potential litigation.

In this regard the Examiner notes that although the preamble of claim 13 recites networks and servers and client systems, which are included in the technological arts, the body of the claim limitations fails to apply, involve, use, or advance the technological arts.

Additionally, for a claimed invention to be statutory, the claimed invention must produce a useful, concrete, and tangible result. In the present case, the claimed invention produces a possible warning of potential litigation. The results cannot be assured (i.e., not repeatable). If the warning were to be issued it could then be used in distributing resource allocations in a timely manner (i.e., useful and tangible).

Although the recited process produces a useful, and tangible result, the claims lack concreteness, and in addition, since the claimed invention, as a whole, is not within the technological arts as explained above, claims 1-4, 6, 13 are deemed to be directed to non-statutory subject matter

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

7. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

> (a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negatived by the m3anner in which the invention was made.

8. Claims 1-3, 5-8, 10-15, 17 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Heckman et al, U.S. Patent Number 5, 875, 431 in view of CPR Institute for Dispute Resolution Online Seminar Special Supplement Publication, November 1998, URL: <http://www.disputes.net/cyberweek2001/cpr11.98.pdf>, hereinafter known as CPR.

(A) As per claim 1, Heckman teaches a method of early warning of potential litigation, within an entity (Heckman; see at least column 7, lines 15-36), comprising:

gathering data from internal and external sources (Heckman; see at least column 6, line 24 to column 7, line 12, column 15, line 50 to column 16, line 2);

reviewing potential litigation issues from said gathered data (Heckman; see at least Figure 4, column 8, lines 5-20, 38-62, column 10, line 57 to column 12, line 14);

prioritizing said potential litigation issues into a predetermined order (Heckman; see at least column 7, line 14 to column 8, line 4, column 12, lines 15-28, column 13, lines 1-31, column 17, lines 23-42);

consulting with outside counsel to obtain specialized assistance in selected said potential litigation issues (Heckman; see at least column 9, lines 6-20);

determining whether said potential litigation issues justify an alert or notification (Heckman; see at least column 7, line 14 to column 8, line 4, column 11, lines 17-40, 47-61, column 13, line 58 to column 14, line 9, column 20, lines 35-61, column 22, lines 12-65);

issuing said alert if justified and monitoring an action from said alert (Heckman; column 7, line 21 to column 8, line 20, column 11, lines 17-40, 47-61, column 13, line 58 to column 14,

line 9, column 20, lines 35-61, column 21, lines 15-26, column 22, line 12 to column 23, line 15);

if said alert is not justified, determining whether said issue justifies a report (Heckman; see at least column 7, line 14 to column 8, line 4, column 11, lines 17-40, 47-61, column 13, line 58 to column 14, line 9, column 20, lines 35-61, column 22, lines 12-65, column 28, lines 48-64);

issuing said report and tracking or monitoring its issuance (Heckman; column 19, lines 60-64, column 20, lines 35-47, column 22, line 66 to column 23, line 36, column 24, lines 21-23); and

if litigation on said potential litigation issues occurs, proceeding in a traditional litigation manner, including risk assessments within a predetermined time frame or time schedule (Heckman; see at least column 7, line 36 to column 8, line 4, column 16, line 37 to column 17, line 2, column 22, line 66 to column 23, line 15).

Heckman fails to explicitly disclose early dispute resolution

CPR teaches early dispute resolution (CPR; page 3, column 1, lines 10-28).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the method of Heckman to include early dispute resolution, as taught by CPR, with the motivation of reducing the costs of litigation, saving the company money and contributing to the bottom line for the benefit of both the company and the shareholders (CPR; page 3, column 1, lines 10-28).

(B) As per claims 5-6, Heckman and CPR teach a method as analyzed and disclosed in claim 1 above, wherein said monitoring further comprising:

logging said alert on a database (Heckman; see at least column 15, lines 4-37, column 16, line 16 to column 17, line 21);

deciding whether to implement pre-litigation changes (Heckman; see at least Figure 4, column 7, line 11 to column 8, line 4, column 20, lines 18-47, column 22, lines 11-33);

documenting rationale for a negative decision, if said deciding is negative (Heckman; see at least column 5, lines 60-64, column 13, lines 47-56, column 21, lines 34-57, column 22, lines 11-27);

assigning corrective action (Heckman; see at least Figure 3, Item 39, column 9, lines 5-20, column 23, lines 16-36);

logging said alert on a compliance database (Heckman; see at least column 15, lines 4-37, column 16, line 16 to column 17, line 21);

implementing corrective action (Heckman; see at least column 13, lines 47-56, column 22, line 11 to column 23, line 15);

reporting implementation of said corrective action to a litigation department (Heckman; see at least column 22, line 11 to column 23, line 15, column 23, line 61 to column 24, line 20);

updating said database to reflect timing and corrective action taken (Heckman; see at least Figure 4, Items 26 and 51, column 21, line 63 to column 22, line 10, column 22, lines 38-45, column 25, lines 37-60); and

confirming that enacted compliance actions are in place and remain appropriate (Heckman; see at least Figure 5-2, Item 65, column 23, lines 16-50, column 24, lines 21-26), and

further comprising: sending or uploading a copy of said alert to organizations outside said entity (Heckman; see at least column 21, line 44 to column 22, line 19, column 20, lines 17-47).

(C) Claim 7 differs from claim 1 in that it is a computer usable medium having computer readable program code means embodied therein for an early warning of litigation, rather than method of early warning of potential litigation.

As per claims 7-8, Heckman and CPR teach an article of manufacture comprising:

a computer usable medium having computer readable program code means embodied therein for an early warning of litigation (Heckman; see at least column 5, lines 17-27, column 7, lines 15-36), the computer readable program code means in said article of manufacture comprising:

computer readable program code means for causing a computer to gather data from internal and external sources (Heckman; see at least Figure 2, Figure 4, column 6, line 24 to column 7, line 12, column 15, line 39 to column 16, line 2);

computer readable program code means for causing the computer to assist a user in reviewing potential litigation issues from said gathered data (Heckman; see at least Figure 4, column 8, lines 5-20, 38-62, column 10, line 57 to column 12, line 14);

computer readable program code means for causing the computer to prioritize into a predetermined order said potential litigation issues (Heckman; see at least column 7, line 14 to column 8, line 4, column 12, lines 15-28, column 13, lines 1-31, column 17, lines 23-42, column 22, lines 50-64);

computer readable program code means for causing the computer to communicate with and consult with outside counsel computer system to obtain specialized assistance in selected said potential litigation issues (Heckman; see at least Figure 2, Figure 4, Figure 5-1, column 9, lines 6-20, column 23, line 60 to column 24, line 12);

computer readable program code means for causing the computer to provide criteria for said user to determine whether said potential litigation issues justify an alert (Heckman; see at least column 7, line 14 to column 8, line 4, column 11, lines 17-40, 47-61, column 13, line 58 to column 14, line 9, column 20, lines 35-61, column 22, lines 12-65);

computer readable program code means for causing the computer to issuing said alert if justified and monitoring an action from said alert (Heckman; column 7, line 21 to column 8, line 20, column 11, lines 17-40, 47-61, column 13, line 58 to column 14, line 9, column 20, lines 35-61, column 21, lines 15-26, column 22, line 12 to column 23, line 15);

computer readable program code means for causing the computer to assist said user to determine whether said potential litigation issues justify a report if said alert is not justified (Heckman; see at least column 7, line 14 to column 8, line 4, column 11, lines 17-40, 47-61, column 13, line 58 to column 14, line 9, column 20, lines 35-61, column 22, lines 12-65, column 28, lines 48-64);

computer readable program code means for causing the computer to issue said report and track its issuance (Heckman; column 19, lines 60-64, column 20, lines 35-47, column 22, line 66 to column 23, line 36, column 24, lines 21-23); and

computer readable program code means for causing the computer to monitor and support in a traditional litigation manner, including risk assessment within a predetermined time frame and early dispute resolution if litigation on said issue occurs (Heckman; see at least column 7, line 36 to column 8, line 4, column 16, line 37 to column 17, line 2, column 22, line 66 to column 23, line 15), (CPR; page 3, column 1, lines 10-28), and

wherein said report is an Emerging Issue Report or a warning device for risks of less significance (Heckman; see at least column 7, line 14 to column 8, line 4, column 11, lines 17-40, 47-61, column 13, line 58 to column 14, line 9, column 19, lines 60-64,column 20, lines 35-61, column 22, line 12 to column 23, line 36, column 24, lines 21-23, column 28, lines 48-64).

The motivations for combining the respective teachings of Heckman and CPR are as given in the rejection of claim 1 above, and incorporated herein.

(D) As per claims 2-3, 17, Heckman and CPR teach a method and article of manufacture as analyzed and disclosed in claims 1 and 7 above, wherein said alert is an Early Warning System Alert (CPR; page 7, column 2, lines 2-5) wherein said report is an Emerging Issue Report or a warning device for risks of less significance (Heckman; see at least column 7, line 14 to column 8, line 4, column 11, lines 17-40, 47-61, column 13, line 58 to column 14, line

9, column 19, lines 60-64,column 20, lines 35-61, column 22, line 12 to column 23, line 36, column 24, lines 21-23, column 28, lines 48-64).

(E) Claim 10 differs from claims 1 and 7 in that it is a computer program product comprising a computer usable medium having computer readable program code means embodied in said medium for an early warning of litigation, rather than a method of early warning of potential litigation or a computer usable medium having computer readable program code means embodied therein for an early warning of litigation.

As per claims 10-12, Heckman and CPR teach a computer program product comprising:

a computer usable medium having computer readable program code means embodied in said medium for an early warning of litigation (Heckman; see at least column 5, lines 17-27, column 7, lines 15-36) said computer program product having:

computer readable program code means for causing a computer to gather data from internal and external sources (Heckman; see at least Figure 2, Figure 4, column 6, line 24 to column 7, line 12, column 15, line 39 to column 16, line 2);

computer readable program code means for causing the computer to assist a user in reviewing potential litigation issues from said gathered data (Heckman; see at least Figure 4, column 8, lines 5-20, 38-62, column 10, line 57 to column 12, line 14);

computer readable program code means for causing the computer to prioritize said potential litigation issues (Heckman; see at least column 7, line 14 to column 8, line 4, column 12, lines 15-28, column 13, lines 1-31, column 17, lines 23-42, column 22, lines 50-64);

computer readable program code means for causing the computer to communicate with and consult with outside counsel computer system to obtain specialized assistance in selected said potential litigation issues (Heckman; see at least Figure 2, Figure 4, Figure 5-1, column 9, lines 6-20, column 23, line 60 to column 24, line 12);

computer readable program code means for causing the computer to provide criteria for user to determine whether said potential litigation issues justify an alert (Heckman; see at least column 7, line 14 to column 8, line 4, column 11, lines 17-40, 47-61, column 13, line 58 to column 14, line 9, column 20, lines 35-61, column 22, lines 12-65);

computer readable program code means for causing the computer to issue said alert if justified and monitor an action from said alert (Heckman; column 7, line 21 to column 8, line 20, column 11, lines 17-40, 47-61, column 13, line 58 to column 14, line 9, column 20, lines 35-61, column 21, lines 15-26, column 22, line 12 to column 23, line 15);

computer readable program code means for causing the computer to assist user to determine whether said potential litigation issues justify a report if said alert is not justified (Heckman; see at least column 7, line 14 to column 8, line 4, column 11, lines 17-40, 47-61, column 13, line 58 to column 14, line 9, column 20, lines 35-61, column 22, lines 12-65, column 28, lines 48-64);

computer readable program code means for causing the computer to issue said report and track its issuance (Heckman; column 19, lines 60-64, column 20, lines 35-47, column 22, line 66 to column 23, line 36, column 24, lines 21-23); and

computer readable program code means for causing the computer to monitor and support in a traditional litigation manner, including risk assessment within a predetermined time frame

and early dispute resolution if litigation on said issue occurs (Heckman; see at least column 7, line 36 to column 8, line 4, column 16, line 37 to column 17, line 2, column 22, line 66 to column 23, line 15), (CPR; page 3, column 1, lines 10-28); and

wherein said alert is an Early Warning System Alert (CPR; page 7, column 2, lines 2-5);

wherein said report is an Emerging Issue Report or a warning device for risks of less significance (Heckman; see at least column 7, line 14 to column 8, line 4, column 11, lines 17-40, 47-61, column 13, line 58 to column 14, line 9, column 19, lines 60-64,column 20, lines 35-61, column 22, line 12 to column 23, line 36, column 24, lines 21-23, column 28, lines 48-64).

The motivations for combining the respective teachings of Heckman and CPR are as given in the rejection of claim 1 above, and incorporated herein.

(F) Claim 13 differs from claims 1, 7 and 10 in that it is a method of early warning of potential litigation which includes a computer network, rather than a method of early warning of potential litigation or a computer usable medium having computer readable program code means embodied therein for an early warning of litigation or a computer program product comprising a computer usable medium having computer readable program code means embodied in said medium for an early warning of litigation.

As per claims 13-15, Heckman and CPR teach: In a computer network that includes (i) a plurality of servers for accessing a plurality of network sites containing various types of content, which can be viewed and listened to as appropriate, and downloaded when desired, and that includes (ii) a plurality of client systems connected to a server for purposes of browsing the

network sites (Heckman; see at least Figure 2, column 5, lines 17-27, column 7, lines 15-36), a method of early warning of potential litigation, comprising:

gathering data from internal and external sources (Heckman; see at least Figure 2, Figure 4, column 6, line 24 to column 7, line 12, column 15, line 39 to column 16, line 2);

reviewing potential litigation issues from said gathered data (Heckman; see at least Figure 4, column 8, lines 5-20, 38-62, column 10, line 57 to column 12, line 14);

prioritizing said potential litigation issues (Heckman; see at least column 7, line 14 to column 8, line 4, column 12, lines 15-28, column 13, lines 1-31, column 17, lines 23-42, column 22, lines 50-64);

consulting with outside counsel to obtain specialized assistance in selected said potential litigation issues (Heckman; see at least Figure 2, Figure 4, Figure 5-1, column 9, lines 6-20, column 23, line 60 to column 24, line 12);

determining whether said potential litigation issues justify an alert (Heckman; see at least column 7, line 14 to column 8, line 4, column 11, lines 17-40, 47-61, column 13, line 58 to column 14, line 9, column 20, lines 35-61, column 22, lines 12-65);

issuing said alert if justified and monitoring an action from said alert (Heckman; column 7, line 21 to column 8, line 20, column 11, lines 17-40, 47-61, column 13, line 58 to column 14, line 9, column 20, lines 35-61, column 21, lines 15-26, column 22, line 12 to column 23, line 15);

if said alert is not justified, determining whether said issue justifies a report (Heckman; see at least column 7, line 14 to column 8, line 4, column 11, lines 17-40, 47-61, column 13, line

58 to column 14, line 9, column 20, lines 35-61, column 22, lines 12-65, column 28, lines 48-64);

issuing said report and tracking its issuance (Heckman; column 19, lines 60-64, column 20, lines 35-47, column 22, line 66 to column 23, line 36, column 24, lines 21-23); and

if litigation on said potential litigation issues occurs, proceeding in a traditional litigation manner, including risk assessments within a predetermined time frame and early dispute resolution (Heckman; see at least column 7, line 36 to column 8, line 4, column 16, line 37 to column 17, line 2, column 22, line 66 to column 23, line 15), (CPR; page 3, column 1, lines 10-28) and

wherein said alert is an Early Warning System alert (CPR; page 7, column 2, lines 2-5); and

wherein said report is an Emerging Issue Report or a warning device for risks of less significance (Heckman; see at least column 7, line 14 to column 8, line 4, column 11, lines 17-40, 47-61, column 13, line 58 to column 14, line 9, column 19, lines 60-64,column 20, lines 35-61, column 22, line 12 to column 23, line 36, column 24, lines 21-23, column 28, lines 48-64).

The motivations for combining the respective teachings of Heckman and CPR are as given in the rejection of claim 1 above, and incorporated herein.

9. Claims 4, 9, 16, 18 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Heckman et al, U.S. Patent Number 5, 875, 431 and CPR Institute for Dispute Resolution Online Seminar Special Supplement Publication, November 1998, URL:

<http://www.disputes.net/cyberweek2001/cpr11.98.pdf>, hereinafter known as CPR, as applied to claim 1 above, and further in view of Child Welfare and the Professional report, September 1999, URL: <http://www.chesco.org/pdf/manrepbook.pdf>, hereinafter known as CWP.

(A) As per claims 4, 9, 16, 18 Heckman and CPR teach a method, article of manufacture, and computer program product as analyzed and disclosed in claims 1, 7, 10 and 13 above.

Heckman and CPR fail to explicitly disclose a method wherein said predetermined time frame for assessing the risk is sixty days.

CWP teaches a method wherein said predetermined time frame for assessing the risk is sixty days (CWP; page 4, lines 10-17, page 12, lines 1-2, page 16, lines 16-24).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the method of Heckman to include wherein said predetermined time frame for assessing the risk is sixty days, as taught by CWP, with the motivation of ensuring timely actions by allowing the organization time to initiate an investigation (CWP; page 7, lines 21-22).

Conclusion

10. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to Applicant's disclosure. The cited but not applied references Burchetta et al, U.S. Patent Number 6, 330, 551 and the article teach the environment of predicting litigation and dispute resolution.

Burchetta et al, U.S. Patent Number 6, 330, 551, teaches a system and method for computerized dispute resolution.

Gresenz, C.R. et al, A Flood of Litigation? Predicting the Consequences of Changing Legal Remedies Available to ERISA Beneficiaries. RAND Health and Law Issue Paper. IP-184 (1999). [Retrieved on April 9, 2003] Retrieved from Internet. URL: <http://www.rand.org/publications/IP/IP184/>.

11. Any response to this action should be mailed to:

Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks

Washington D.C. 20231

or faxed to: **(703) 305-7687**.

For informal or draft communications, please label "PROPOSED" or "DRAFT" on the front page of the communication and do NOT sign the communication.

After Final communications should be labeled "Box AF."

Hand-delivered responses should be brought to Crystal Park 5, 2451 Crystal Drive, Arlington, VA, Seventh Floor (Receptionist).

12. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Natalie A. Pass whose telephone number is (703) 305-3980. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday through Thursday from 9:00 AM to 6:30 PM. The examiner can also be reached on alternate Fridays.

13. If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Joseph Thomas, can be reached at (703) 305-9588. Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the Receptionist whose telephone number is (703) 308-1113.

NP

Natalie A. Pass

April 17, 2003

Joseph Thomas

JOSEPH THOMAS
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER
TECHNOLOGY CENTER 3600